SECTION 2

The Louisiana Purchase and Exploration

One American's Story

In 1803, an expedition led by explorers **Meriwether Lewis** and **William Clark** set out to explore the American West. As they neared the Rocky Mountains, Lewis and Clark hired a French trapper to act as an interpreter with the Native Americans. He brought along his young wife, **Sacagawea**, a Shoshone Indian. Her knowledge of Native American languages and the land played an essential role in the expedition.

This detail from *Lewis and Clark* by N. C. Wyeth shows Sacagawea with Meriwether Lewis.

PRIMARY SOURCE

"*The sight* of this Indian woman . . . [assured the Native Americans] of our friendly intentions. . . . No woman ever accompanied a war party in this quarter."

—**William Clark, journal entry, October 19, 1805**

Sacagawea did more than enable conversation and trade. Her presence led many tribes to believe that the explorers came in peace.

The Louisiana Purchase

KEY QUESTION How did the United States acquire the Louisiana Purchase?

When Americans talked about the West in 1800, they meant the area between the Appalachian Mountains and the Mississippi River.

The West in 1800 By 1800, thousands of settlers were moving westward across the Appalachians. Many settled on land inhabited by Native Americans. Even so, several U.S. territories soon declared statehood. Kentucky and Tennessee became states by 1800, and Ohio entered the union in 1803.

Although the Mississippi River was then the western border of the United States, there was much activity farther west. France and Spain were negotiating for ownership of the Louisiana Territory—the vast region between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains.

The Mississippi River and New Orleans As the number of westerners grew, so did their political influence. A vital issue for many farmers and merchants was the use of the Mississippi River. They used this highway of commerce to transport their products through the New Orleans port, across the Gulf of Mexico, and then to East Coast markets.

Although originally claimed by France, the port was turned over to Spain after the French and Indian War. In a secret treaty in 1800, Spain returned the port to France's powerful leader, Napoleon. Now Napoleon planned to colonize the American territory. This brought America close to war.

The United States Expands In 1802, before turning Louisiana over to France, Spain closed New Orleans to American shipping. Angry westerners called for war against both Spain and France. To avoid hostilities, Jefferson offered to buy New Orleans from France. He received a surprising answer. The French asked if the United States wanted to buy all of the Louisiana Territory—a tract of land even larger than the entire United States at that time.

A number of factors may have influenced Napoleon's offer. He was probably alarmed by America's determination to keep the port of New Orleans open. Also, his enthusiasm for a colony in America may have been lessened by events in Haiti, a French colony in the West Indies. There, a revolt led by Toussaint L'Ouverture (too•SAN loo•vehr•TOOR) had resulted in disastrous losses for the French. Another factor was France's costly war against Britain. America's money may have been more valuable to Napoleon than land.

Jefferson was thrilled by Napoleon's offer. However, the Constitution said nothing about the president's right to buy land. This troubled Jefferson, who believed in the strict interpretation of the Constitution. But he also believed in a republic of small farmers, and that required land. So, on April 30, 1803, the **Louisiana Purchase** was approved for $15 million—about three cents per acre. The size of the United States doubled. At the time, most Americans knew little about this territory. But that would soon change.

▲ **SUMMARIZE** Explain how the United States acquired the Louisiana Territory.

Connect *to the* World

Dissent and Rebellion
Haiti had been a highly profitable French colony that used slave labor. Toussaint L'Ouverture, a former slave, led a 1791 rebellion against French rule. Thirteen bloody years later, Haiti became the first independent black republic in the world.

Exploring the Louisiana Territory

▼ **KEY QUESTION** What were some effects of exploring the Louisiana Territory?

Since 1802, Thomas Jefferson had planned an expedition to the Louisiana country. Now that the Louisiana Purchase had been made, learning about the territory became more important than ever.

The Lewis and Clark Expedition Jefferson chose a young officer, Captain Meriwether Lewis, to lead an exploration of the Louisiana country. Lewis asked Lieutenant William Clark, a mapmaker and outdoorsman, to help him oversee a volunteer force, or **corps**. They called it the Corps of Discovery, but it soon became known as the **Lewis and Clark expedition**.

Clark was accompanied by York, his African-American slave. York's hunting skills won him many admirers. The first black man that many Native Americans had seen, he became something of a celebrity among them.

The Journey Begins Lewis and Clark set out in the summer of 1803. By winter, they reached St. Louis. Located on the western bank of the Mississippi River, St. Louis would soon become the gateway to the West. But in 1803 it was a sleepy town. Lewis and Clark spent the winter there, waiting for the official transfer of Louisiana to the United States. In March 1804, the American flag flew over St. Louis for the first time.

West to the Ocean The expedition, which numbered about 40, left St. Louis in May of 1804. Jefferson had instructed them to explore the Missouri River in hopes of finding a water route across the continent. He also told them to establish good relations with Native Americans and to describe the landscape, plants, and animals they saw.

After reaching what is now North Dakota, the explorers spent the winter with the Mandan people. They also met British and Canadian trappers and traders, who were not happy to see them. The traders feared American competition in the trade in beaver fur—and they would be proved right.

In the spring of 1805, the expedition set out again. This time they were joined by Sacagawea, who was a Shoshone Indian. Her language skills—she knew sign language and several Native American languages—and her knowledge of geography would be of great value to Lewis and Clark.

ONLINE PRIMARY SOURCE

Hear the perspectives at the **Research & Writing Center @ ClassZone.com**

COMPARING *Perspectives*

President Thomas Jefferson sponsored Lewis and Clark's expedition to the West, where they met almost 50 tribes. In an 1806 speech, Jefferson described his goals for relations between the United States and Native Americans. From the Native American perspective, Kiowa Chief Satanta (c. 1830–1878) later described the impact of Jefferson's policies.

Jefferson Speaks

"My friends and children. We are descended from the old nations which live beyond the great water: but we and our forefathers have been so long here that we seem like you to have grown out of this land . . . you are all my children . . . we wish as a true father should do, that we may all live together as one household."

—Thomas Jefferson, Speech to a Delegation of Indian Chiefs, January 4, 1806

Satanta Speaks

"I hear a great deal of good talk from the gentlemen the Great Father sends us . . . I have heard you intend to settle us on a reservation near the mountains. I don't want to settle. . . . A long time ago this land belonged to our fathers, but when I go up to the river I see camps of soldiers on its banks. These soldiers cut down my timber, they kill my buffalo and when I see that, my heart feels like bursting."

—Satanta, Kiowa Chief, September 1876

CRITICAL THINKING

1. **Make Inferences** What did Jefferson want for Native Americans?
2. **Analyze** Why were the Native Americans resentful of the soldiers?

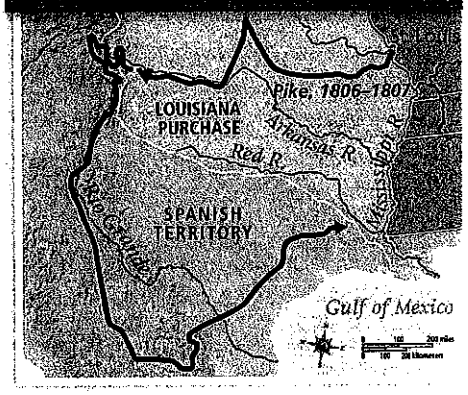
As they approached the Rocky Mountains, Sacagawea pointed out Shoshone lands. Lewis and a small party made their way overland. The chief recognized Sacagawea as his sister and traded horses to Lewis and Clark. This enabled the explorers to cross the mountains. The expedition continued on to the Columbia River, which leads to the Pacific Ocean. The group arrived at the Pacific Coast in November 1805 and returned to St. Louis in 1806.

Lewis and Clark brought back a wealth of valuable information. Though they learned that an all-water route across the continent did not exist, Americans received an exciting report of what lay to the west. More importantly, the expedition produced the first good maps of the Louisiana Territory.

Zebulon Pike and the Southern Route In 1806, an expedition led by explorer **Zebulon Pike** left St. Louis on a southerly route to find the sources of the Arkansas and Red rivers. The group entered Spanish territory and was arrested. The explorers were released in 1807 and returned to the United States.

Pike's group brought back valuable descriptions of the land it explored. Not all these descriptions were accurate, however. For example, Pike described the treeless Great Plains as a desert. This led many Americans to believe, mistakenly, that the Plains region was useless for farming.

Pike's Route *1806–1807*



▲ **CAUSES AND EFFECTS** Describe some effects of exploring the Louisiana Territory.

2 Section Assessment

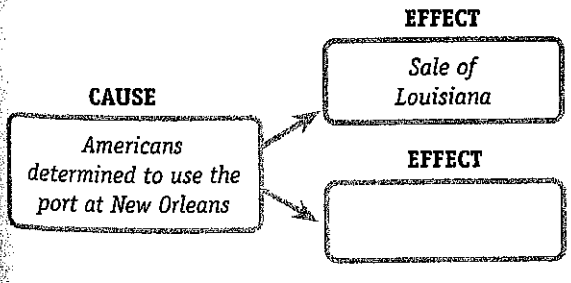
ONLINE QUIZ
For test practice, go to
Interactive Review @ ClassZone.com

TERMS & NAMES

1. Explain the importance of
   - Louisiana Purchase
   - Meriwether Lewis
   - William Clark
   - Sacagawea
   - Zebulon Pike

USING YOUR READING NOTES

2. **Causes and Effects** Complete the diagram you started at the beginning of this section. Then create a diagram for each of the other main events in this section.



KEY IDEAS

3. Why was the Louisiana Purchase important to Jefferson?
4. Why were Lewis and Clark instructed to document the natural resources they found in their travels?

CRITICAL THINKING

5. **Evaluate** How did the Louisiana Purchase change the United States?
6. **Make Inferences** How might the information gathered by the explorers be useful to Jefferson?
7. **Recognize Bias and Propaganda** Read the quote by Jefferson on page 348. Is it propaganda? Explain.
8. **Connect to Today** Explorers still seek government funding for new expeditions. Where might today's explorers want to study?
9. **Writing** **Letter** Write a one-page letter from Jefferson to Lewis in which you describe your goals for the exploration of the Louisiana Territory.